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has accustomed us; the alterations seemed to do their best to make part of his article either frivolous or pompous.

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THE MECHANISTIC PROBLEM.

This number of *The Monist* contains much valuable material on the pro and con of the mechanistic problem. The dualist side is maintained by Dr. William Benjamin Smith of Tulane University who formulates the question with great precision and makes an eloquent plea for the idea that the present is governed by the future and that man is not mechanically pushed but that his ideals pull him upward and on. Dr. Jacques Loeb of the Rockefeller Institute, on the other hand, represents the extreme naturalists who scent the old-fashioned teleology not only in theology but also in all philosophical aspirations. His view is supported, in the name of the late Clémence Royer and her followers, by M. Aristides Pratelle. Professor Loeb goes so far as to suggest that ethicists and educators of the future will have to find their medicine for curing the moral ills of mankind in the storehouse of biochemistry, a proposition which is well brought out by one of his admirers, Dr. Leonard Keene Hirshberg.¹

The editor of *The Monist* deems both positions wrongly taken, or rather thinks that both are one-sided presentations of certain truths which if properly stated form no contradiction but present a contrast of the greatest importance.

The contrast between these two views may be traced through the history of philosophy. There have always been thinkers on either side, and both views have been upheld with great vigor and have been important factors in the development of mankind. We intend to publish an editorial on the subject in a forthcoming number and wish here merely to characterize briefly our view.

We believe that the mechanistic theory is absolutely right in so far as it claims that the mechanical principle has to be applied to all events, processes and happenings without any exception, for necessarily all movements must take place according to mechanical laws—even the motions of the brain can form no exception; but we insist that mechanical laws apply only to mechanics, which truth

¹ See the review of Professor Loeb's recent book, *The Mechanistic Conception of Life*, pp. 152-158, especially 154 ff.

may be expressed in the tautology that all motions are subject to the laws of motion.

Nevertheless, there are features in the world which are not motions, and it is wrong to expect an explanation of their nature and significance from the laws of motion. This is especially true of the interpretation of forms in the actual world and of the products of formal combinations in the realm of purely formal thought. Among other things we have to deal with logic and geometry. How can we deduce a logical syllogism from mechanistic principles if the interconnection of logical ideas is purely logical; and, further, according to what mechanistic principle can we explain the interrelation of a triangle by laws of motion? The reverse is true: we explain mechanics from, and formulate the laws of mechanics according to, the theorems of geometry, and the mechanics of thinking find their explanation in the more general laws of logic. To construct a triangle we must draw lines but from the act of drawing lines we cannot prove the interrelation of the parts of the triangle.

Motion is a generalization of all changes of place that occur in our own bodies and in the entire objective world around us. But in making this generalization we omit one highly important feature of our experience, namely, the feeling which is the ultimate condition of our entire psychic and mental life.

We do not believe that there are feelings in themselves; we accept the theory of the so-called parallelism. We believe that feelings are the inner side of physical occurrences; feelings are the subjective aspect of certain motions which take place in organisms.

We consider it a fact that the main feature of mental life consists in purpose. Man is a purposive being; he follows the lead of ideals, of aspirations, of aims which he pursues, and one of the main problems of philosophy is to explain how such a thing as purpose can originate in a world where all events, all happenings, all motions, take place according to mechanistic principles.

The reader will notice that we limit the application of the mechanistic principle to motions and we state that all happenings, all events, all occurrences, all processes, all acts of living beings, including the acts of man, are motions, or changes, or to be quite unequivocal, they are somehow changes of place. But those features of life which are not motions play also an important part. They affect the mechanical processes of life and in them the non-mechanical lies hidden.

Thinking, that is to say, the act of thinking, in its physiological

aspect as a cerebral motion is absolutely mechanical. Every idea is a definite brain structure and in its action it is as much subject to the law of mechanics as is the falling stone. But is the meaning of the idea mechanical? Here lies the problem.

Not finding room in this number for the exposition of this important subject, we must be satisfied here to let the representatives of both sides have their say and for ourselves will only reserve the right to discuss the problem in the near future. P. C.

WRONG GENERALIZATIONS IN PHILOSOPHY.

SCHOPENHAUER AND FREUD.

One common source of error in philosophy has been the principle of generalization wrongly applied. For the sake of explaining phenomena we must understand that a higher development produces new conditions which are absolutely absent in the lower strata of life. Now it happens that some philosophers take features typical of the highest and most complicated forms of existence and generalize them to explain the nature of lower forms. Others do the reverse. They generalize the lowest forms and explain all higher features as mere repetitions of simpler modes of activity.

As a typical instance of the wrong generalization of the higher forms of life over all lower manifestations, we refer to Schopenhauer and his theory of the will. When the stone falls the naturalist calls it gravity, and we ask with surprise what is the impulse that makes the stone fall. Schopenhauer answers, It is the will. The stone wills to fall to the center of the earth according to the Newtonian law and that explains the phenomena of gravitation. Goethe makes Mephistopheles in his rôle of professor say to the student that man is pleased to hear words:

"With words 't is excellent disputing;
Systems to words 't is easy suiting;
On words 't is excellent believing;
No word can ever lose a jot from thieving."

The opposite course, but in principle the same method, is followed by Freud who bases his psychology upon the erotic instinct. The higher life of man is enfolded in a rich complexity of noble and sometimes highly altruistic tendencies, in the love of parents, devotion of children, love of country, of ideals and many aspirations. Observers of life stand in awe before the wonders of